

1 SHAMPOO BOWL ASSEMBLY AND SHAMPOO BOWL CUSHION

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3
4 Field of the Invention

5
6 This invention relates to salon equipment, and, more
7 particularly, to shampoo bowls and to cushioning devices
8 for shampoo bowls.
9

10 Background of the Invention

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12 A shampoo bowls is a specialized device that has a
13 basin having a U-shaped, neck-receiving notch formed
14 therein for receiving the neck of a user so as to position
15 the user's head in the basin so that the user's hair can be
16 washed by a hair stylist, a hair care specialist, a barber,
17 etc. In an effort to protect patrons' necks from the hard
18 surface of the U-shaped notch of shampoo bowls, skilled
19 artisans have developed various devices adapted to fit into
20 the U-shaped notch for providing cushioning. Although the
21 art is replete with various types of devices adapted to fit
22 in the U-shaped notch of shampoo bowls to provide
23 cushioning against the hard surface of the notch, they are
24 either difficult to construct, become easily fowled with

1 cleaning preparations, and fail to incorporate structure
2 that is designed to conduct water and fluid away from the
3 patron's neck and into the basin of the shampoo bowl.
4 Given these and other deficiencies in the art, the need for
5 certain new and useful improvements is evident.

Summary of the Invention

Disclosed is a cushioning device adapted for attachment to a shampoo bowl including a front wall having an inner surface and an outer surface, and a U-shaped, neck-receiving notch in the front wall. The cushioning device consists of a flexible cushion constructed of a matrix of formed cushioning pockets separated by seams. The flexible cushion has opposing proximal and distal extremities and a waist therebetween. The waist is adapted to overlie a segment of the U-shaped, neck receiving notch, the proximal extremity is adapted to overlie a portion of the inner surface of the front wall, and the distal extremity is adapted to overlie a portion of the outer surface of the front wall. The cushioning pockets are adapted to provide a cushioning effect, and the seams are adapted to provide fluid conducting channels or grooves. In a preferred embodiment, the proximal and distal extremities of the cushion are enlarged relative to the waist and to the U-shaped, neck-receiving notch. In one embodiment, the pockets are filled with air. In another embodiment, the pockets are filled with viscous gel material. The proximal extremity is to be detachably secured to the inner surface of the front wall of the

1 shampoo bowl, and the distal extremity of the flexible
2 cushion is to be detachably secured to the outer surface of
3 the front wall of the shampoo bowl. In a preferred
4 embodiment, the proximal extremity of the flexible cushion
5 is fashioned with at least one attached suction cup for
6 providing a suction cup coupling to the inner surface of
7 the front wall of the shampoo bowl. In another embodiment,
8 there is provided a hook medium attached to one of the
9 inner surface of the front wall of the shampoo bowl and the
10 proximal extremity of the flexible cushion device, and a
11 detachably engagable loop medium attached to the other one
12 of the inner surface of the front wall of the shampoo bowl
13 and the proximal extremity of the flexible cushion. In a
14 preferred embodiment, the distal extremity of the flexible
15 cushion is fashioned with at least one attached suction cup
16 for providing a suction cup coupling to the outer surface
17 of the front wall of the shampoo bowl. In another
18 embodiment, there is provided a hook medium attached to one
19 of the outer surface of the front wall of the shampoo bowl
20 and the distal extremity of the flexible cushion, and a
21 detachably engagable loop medium attached to the other one
22 of the outer surface of the front wall of the shampoo bowl
23 and the distal extremity of the flexible cushion.

1 Also disclosed is a shampoo bowl assembly consisting
2 of a shampoo bowl including a front wall having an inner
3 surface and an outer surface, a U-shaped, neck-receiving
4 notch in the front wall, and an attached flexible cushion.
5 The flexible cushion has opposing proximal and distal
6 extremities and a waist therebetween, and is fashioned of a
7 matrix of formed cushioning pockets separated by seams.
8 The waist is positioned so as to overlie a segment of the
9 U-shaped, neck receiving notch, the proximal extremity is
10 positioned so as to overlie a portion of the inner surface
11 of the front wall, and the distal extremity is positioned
12 so as to overlie a portion of the outer surface of the
13 front wall. The cushioning pockets are adapted to provide
14 a cushioning effect, and the seams are adapted to provide
15 fluid conducting channels or grooves. In a preferred
16 embodiment, the proximal and distal extremities of the
17 cushion are enlarged relative to the waist and to the U-
18 shaped, neck-receiving notch. In one embodiment, the
19 pockets are filled with air. In another embodiment, the
20 pockets are filled with viscous gel material. The proximal
21 extremity is detachably secured to the inner surface of the
22 front wall of the shampoo bowl, and the distal extremity of
23 the flexible cushion is detachably secured to the outer
24 surface of the front wall of the shampoo bowl. In a

1 preferred embodiment, the proximal extremity of the
2 flexible cushion is fashioned with at least one attached
3 suction cup providing a suction cup coupling to the inner
4 surface of the front wall of the shampoo bowl. In another
5 embodiment, there is provided a hook medium attached to one
6 of the inner surface of the front wall of the shampoo bowl
7 and the proximal extremity of the flexible cushion device,
8 and a loop medium attached to the other one of the inner
9 surface of the front wall of the shampoo bowl and the
10 proximal extremity of the flexible cushion, in which the
11 hook and loop medium are engaged to one another detachably
12 engaging the proximal extremity of the flexible cushion to
13 the inner surface of the shampoo bowl. In a preferred
14 embodiment, the distal extremity of the flexible cushion is
15 fashioned with at least one attached suction cup providing
16 a suction cup coupling to the outer surface of the front
17 wall of the shampoo bowl. In another embodiment, there is
18 provided a hook medium attached to one of the outer surface
19 of the front wall of the shampoo bowl and the distal
20 extremity of the flexible cushion, and a loop medium
21 attached to the other one of the outer surface of the front
22 wall of the shampoo bowl and the distal extremity of the
23 flexible cushion, in which the hook and loop medium are
24 engaged to one another detachably engaging the distal

1 extremity end of the flexible cushion to the outer surface
2 of the shampoo bowl.

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4 In a shampoo bowl including a front wall having an
5 inner surface and an outer surface, and a U-shaped, neck-
6 receiving notch in the front wall, also disclosed is a
7 method consisting of 1)providing a flexible cushion
8 constructed of a matrix of formed cushioning pockets
9 separated by seams that form recesses, channels or grooves,
10 the flexible cushion including opposing proximal and distal
11 extremities and a waist therebetween; 2)positioning the
12 waist so as to overlie a segment of the U-shaped, neck
13 receiving notch, positioning the proximal extremity so as
14 to overlie a portion of the inner surface of the front
15 wall, and positioning the distal extremity so as to overlie
16 a portion of the outer surface of the front wall;
17 3)securing the proximal extremity of the cushion to the
18 inner surface of the front wall of the shampoo bowl; 4)and
19 securing the distal extremity of the cushion to the outer
20 surface of the front wall of the shampoo bowl; wherein the
21 pockets and the seams are directed away from the shampoo
22 bowl. In a preferred embodiment, the proximal and distal
23 extremities of the cushion are enlarged relative to the
24 waist and to the U-shaped, neck-receiving notch. In one

1 embodiment, the pockets are filled with air. In another
2 embodiment, the pockets are filled with viscous gel
3 material.

4

5 Consistent with the foregoing summary of preferred
6 embodiments of the invention and the ensuing specification,
7 which are intended to be taken together, the invention also
8 contemplates associated apparatus and method embodiments.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Referring to the drawings:

FIG. 1 is an isometric view of a cushioning device arranged of a U-shaped notch in front wall of a shampoo bowl;

FIG. 2 is a top plan of the cushioning device of FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a side elevational view of the cushioning device of FIG. 1, the opposing side elevational view being a substantial mirror image;

FIG. 4 is a sectional view taken along line 4-4 of FIG. 1;

FIG. 5 is a vertical sectional view of a segment of the cushioning device of FIG. 1 illustrating pockets thereof with recesses therebetween, and an attached suction cup;

1 FIG. 6 is illustrative of a hook and loop fastening
2 assembly for use in attaching the cushioning device of FIG.
3 1 to a shampoo bowl;

4

5 FIG. 7 is an enlarged fragmented isometric view of the
6 flexible cushion of FIG. 1 illustrating a pattern of
7 pockets and recesses; and

8

9 FIG. 8 is an example of another pattern of pockets and
10 recesses for a cushioning device constructed and arranged
11 in accordance with the invention.

1 DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF A PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

2
3 Turning now to the drawings, in which like reference
4 characters indicate corresponding elements throughout the
5 several views, attention is first directed to FIG. 1 in
6 which there is seen a shampoo bowl 10 and an attached
7 cushioning device 20. Shampoo bowl 10 consists of a wash
8 basin 11 having a front wall 12, an opposing back wall 13,
9 and a faucet 14 including hot and cold water controls 15
10 and an attached spray head 16. With additional reference
11 to FIG. 4, front wall 12 has inner and outer surfaces 17
12 and 18 (inner surface 17 shown only in FIG. 4), and a U-
13 shaped, neck-receiving notch 19.

14
15 Set forth for purposes of orientation and reference in
16 connection with the ensuing detailed description of the
17 preferred embodiment of the instant invention, the
18 foregoing brief description of shampoo bowl 10 is intended
19 to be generally representative of a typical shampoo bowl.
20 Details not specifically illustrated and described will be
21 readily understood and appreciated by those skilled in the
22 art.

23
24 Cushioning device 20 consists of a flexible cushion

1 21, which in shape is wide and relatively flat that
2 consists of, as best seen in FIGS. 3 and 7, a matrix of
3 formed cushioning pockets 22 that are separated by seams
4 23, which act as living hinges providing cushion 21 with
5 tremendous flexibility and formability. The material
6 defining pockets 22 and seams 23 is, in a preferred
7 embodiment, low density polyethylene or other similar
8 plastic or plastic-like water-repellent material or
9 combination of water-repellant materials. Seams 23 define
10 recess, channels or grooves.

11

12 Turning momentarily to FIG. 5, there is seen an
13 enlarged vertical sectional view of cushion 21 illustrating
14 adjacent pockets 22 and seams 23 therebetween. Seams 23
15 are formed seams between pockets 22. In one embodiment,
16 pockets 22 are filled with air or other selected gas, such
17 as Nitrogen or Argon or the like, or combination of gases.
18 In another embodiment, pockets 22 are filled with viscous
19 gel material, such as readily available thermally
20 conductive gel material, or other high viscosity gel or
21 gel-like material commonly used in connection with readily
22 available gel packs, and this is preferred. Accordingly,
23 reference character 25 in FIG. 5 is intended to denote
24 viscous gel material disposed in, and contained by, pockets

1 22. Other cushioning material can be used to fill pockets
2 22, such as silica gel, beads, sand, etc. Cushions that
3 consist of a matrix of pockets of gas or gel or other
4 cushioning material, which are separated by seams, are
5 well-known in the art, and this specific aspect of cushion
6 21 is intended to be generally representative of such well-
7 known cushion structures. Further details of this specific
8 aspect of cushion 21 not specifically illustrated and
9 described will be readily understood and appreciated by
10 those skilled in the art.

11

12 Looking to FIG. 2, cushion 21 has, in accordance with
13 the principle of the invention, opposing proximal and
14 distal extremities 30 and 31, and a waist 32 therebetween.
15 Although cushion 21 is highly flexible, FIG. 3 depicts
16 cushion 21 in a flattened state for the purpose of
17 illustrating its opposing major faces 35 and 36, in which
18 face 35 is considered an inner face of cushion 21 and face
19 36 is considered an outer face of cushion. As shown in
20 FIG. 3, pockets 22 project outwardly from face 36, in which
21 seams 23, which constitute recessed channels or grooves
22 between pockets 22, are disposed at face 36. Referring
23 back to FIG. 7, pockets 22 are generally equal in size and
24 are disposed in essentially a checkerboard pattern. As a

1 result of this checkerboard pattern of pockets 22, seams 23
2 define a plurality of spaced-apart parallel first recesses
3 or channels or grooves that, for the purpose of
4 orientation, reside along parallel X-axes, and a plurality
5 of spaced-apart parallel second recesses or channels or
6 grooves that, for the purpose of orientation, reside along
7 parallel Y-axes. The parallel first axes and the parallel
8 second axes, which are disposed essentially in a criss-
9 cross pattern as governed by the checkerboard disposition
10 of pockets 22, intersect at generally right angles, as
11 shown. Consistent with the teachings of this disclosure,
12 other patterns for pockets 22 and seams 23 can be used, if
13 desired, such as a diamond pattern, a triangular pattern as
14 depicted in FIG. 8, etc.

15

16 In use, cushion 21 is taken up and attached to shampoo
17 bowl 10 so as to provide cushioning at notch 19. In
18 accordance with the invention, face 35 is presented against
19 shampoo bowl 20 so as to direct pockets 22 and seams 23
20 away from shampoo bowl 10. Looking to FIGS. 1 and 4, neck
21 32 is positioned so as to overly notch 19, proximal
22 extremity 30 is directed into basin 11 so as to overly a
23 portion of inner surface 17 of front wall 12 underlying
24 notch 19, and distal extremity 31 is directed outwardly

1 from basin 11 so as to overly a portion of outer surface 18
2 of front wall 12 underlying notch 19. The inherent and
3 exemplary flexibility and formability of cushion 21 as
4 provided by its construction as previously explained causes
5 waist 32 to conform to the U-shape of notch 19 and causes
6 proximal and distal extremities 30 and 31 to fold over
7 basin 11 and drape downwardly along either side of notch
8 19. After cushion 21 is so installed, a user may direct
9 his head into basin 11 and rest his neck in notch 19
10 against waist 32.

11

12 Proximal and distal extremities 30 and 31 of cushion
13 21 are substantially equally sized and shape, and are each
14 enlarged, i.e., wider, relative to waist 32, and this
15 aspect is readily depicted in FIG. 2. The narrowed
16 constitution of waist 32 is important, as it adapts and
17 arranges waist 32 to fit competently and snugly into notch
18 19 so as to provide a cushioning effect at notch 19 for a
19 user to enjoy when his neck is positioned thereon during
20 use of shampoo bowl. The enlarged constitution of proximal
21 and distal extremities 30 and 31 is also important, as it
22 provides the proximal and distal extremities 30 and 31 with
23 ballast that improves the stability of cushion 21 as it
24 sits against shampoo bowl 10, and prevents cushion 21 from

1 inadvertently falling both into basin 11 and outwardly from
2 basin 11 as proximal and distal extremities 30 and 31 are
3 also enlarged relative to notch 19. Pockets 22, which are
4 directed outwardly, function to provide a cushioning effect
5 for a user's neck positioned thereon at notch 19. Seams 23
6 are important as they function as fluid conducting recesses
7 or channels or grooves that conduct water away from the
8 users neck and downwardly into basin 11 during use of
9 shampoo bowl 10, namely, when the user is having his hair
10 washed by a hair care specialist, a hair stylist, etc. It
11 is to be understood that when cushion 21 is installed with
12 a shampoo bowl as herein described, seams 23 carried by
13 cushion 21 from waist 32 to proximal extremity 30 are
14 constructed and arranged to direct fluid into basin 11 and
15 away from the neck of a patron positioned resting in notch
16 19 against waist 32 of cushion 21. This same discussion
17 applies also when the installation of cushion 21 is
18 reversed, in which proximal extremity 30 is directed out of
19 shampoo bowl 10 and distal extremity 31 is directed into
20 shampoo bowl 10. In this installation of cushion 21,
21 distal extremity 31 can be considered the proximal
22 extremity of cushion 21, and proximal extremity 30 can be
23 considered the distal extremity of cushion 21.

1 Cushion 21 incorporates structure for detachably
2 securing it in place to shampoo bowl 10 and, more
3 particularly, for detachably securing proximal extremity 30
4 to inner surface 17 of front wall 12 of shampoo bowl 10,
5 and for detachably securing distal extremity 31 of cushion
6 21 to outer surface 18 of front wall 12 of shampoo bowl 10.
7 In a preferred embodiment, cushion is provided with suction
8 cups 40 as seen in FIGS. 2 and 3. Looking specifically to
9 FIG. 3, suction cups 40 are attached to cushion 21 and
10 project away from face 35. In this immediate embodiment,
11 proximal extremity 30 is fashioned with two opposing
12 suction cups 40 that are disposed on either side of
13 proximal extremity 30, although less or more can be used.
14 Distal extremity 31 is also fashioned with a two opposing
15 suction cups 40 that are disposed on either side of distal
16 extremity 31, although less or more can be used. Suction
17 cups 40 are conventional and are substantially identical,
18 in which one is shown in detail in FIG. 5. Suction cup 40
19 is attached to a rivet 41 that is riveted to cushion 21 at
20 one of seams 23. Other ways of securing suction cup 40 to
21 cushion 21 can be used, such as adhesive attachment, a
22 pinned attachment, etc. To secure proximal extremity 30 to
23 shampoo bowl 10, a user need only apply its attached
24 suction cups 40 against inner surface 17 of front wall 12.

1 To secure distal extremity 31 to shampoo bowl 10, a user
2 need only apply its attached suction cups 40 against outer
3 surface 18 of front wall 12. To remove cushion 21 from
4 shampoo bowl 10, one need only apply take up cushion 21,
5 such as by hand, and apply a forcible impulse to cushion 21
6 that is sufficient to overcome the suction cup coupling of
7 suction cups 40.

8
9 Although suction cups 40 are preferred for detachably
10 securing cushion 21 to shampoo bowl 10 as herein described,
11 other types of fastening mechanisms can be used such as
12 mutual snap fasteners, water-proof adhesive, etc. As a
13 matter of example, FIG. 6 illustrates a segment of cushion
14 21 and a segment of shampoo bowl 10, in which there is a
15 hook medium 50 attached (such as with adhesive) to face 35
16 of cushion 21 and a detachably engagable loop medium 51
17 attached (such as with adhesive) to shampoo bowl 10, in
18 which a detachable engagement of cushion 21 is provided
19 when hook medium 50 brought into engagement with loop
20 medium 51. Although in the instant example hook medium 50
21 is attached to cushion 21 and loop medium 51 is attached to
22 shampoo bowl 10, this can be reversed, if desired. A hook
23 and loop fastening pair can be used in lieu of each of
24 suction cups 40, if desired.

1 The invention has been described above with reference
2 to a preferred embodiment. However, those skilled in the
3 art will recognize that changes and modifications may be
4 made to embodiment without departing from the nature and
5 scope of the invention. Various changes and modifications
6 to the embodiment herein chosen for purposes of
7 illustration will readily occur to those skilled in the
8 art. To the extent that such modifications and variations
9 do not depart from the spirit of the invention, they are
10 intended to be included within the scope thereof.

11

12 Having fully described the invention in such clear and
13 concise terms as to enable those skilled in the art to
14 understand and practice the same, the invention claimed is: